THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) The expenditure incurred by the Department of Ocean Development, since it was created as a separate Department in March 1982 has been on an average Rs. 18 crores per year.

(b) Yes, Sir. The major programmes of the Department include survey and exploration of living and non living resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone, survey and exploration of deep seabed for polymetallic nodules, Antarctic Research, exploration of renewable sources of energy from waves etc.

(c) No such estimates can be made accurately at this stage.

(d) The expenditure incurred so far is an investment for the future socio-economic gains to the country. However, there have been tangible gains in the sense that in India the production of seafood and the export of marine products are showing progressive increase. Exploitation of offshore minerals such as ilmenite, monazite, etc., has also been gaining momentum. Recently, the United Nations has allocated an exclusive site to India for the exploration of minerals in the Central Indian Ocean. In Antarctica, India's continued work has won the country an international acclaim.

Vessels for expeditions to Antarctica

415. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the vessels being used for expeditions to Antarctica are hired from foreign countries;

(b) if so, the expenditure incurred towards the hire charges of the vessels during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether efforts were made to build indigenous vessels for the expeditions; if so, the details of efforts made so far by the Government;

(d) what are the details of major constraints which compelled the Government to hire foreign vessels for the expeditions; and

(e) what is the plan of the Government to build vessels for the purpose indigenously?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The yearly expenditure is indicated below:

Year	Expedition No.	Expenditure including hire charges, mobilisation/demobilisation, food and lodging expenses, fuel, insurance, port charges etc.
1987-88	7th expedition	Rs. 3.26 crores approx.
1986-87	6th expedition	Rs. 2.90 crores approx.
1985-86	5th expedition	Rs. 3.22 crores approx.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) It will not be economically viable to invest large sums of money in infrastructure for building such a specialised vessel in the country in the context of our limited requirement.

(e) Government have no plan to build such vessels indigenously.